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Bilibid and beyond: Race, body size, and the native in early American colonial Philippines

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The United States' occupation of the Philippines began with proclamations of a new era of development and the prospect of local political representation. In coming to grips with what they saw as America's civilising mission, colonial scholars and officials sought information about the peoples of the Philippines by conducting a census and various population studies, using an array of methodologies drawn from criminology and physical anthropology. This article traces and critiques representations of the Philippine population in the 1903 Philippine Census as well as in several related studies published in the early American period, which served to reduce the Filipinos to a state of 'otherness' which served to justify colonial projects. Several of these racialised studies used the inmates of Bilibid Prison, both alive and dead, as experimental and documentary subjects to create a record of Filipino 'sample types' for various administrative and other purposes, such as the exhibition at the St Louis World's Fair of 1904. Bilibid prisoners' body size, brain weight, skin colour, facial features and other physical attributes were selectively correlated with other colonial constructions of Filipino individuals and groups, such as 'wildness' and political maturity.

The Philippine Bill of 1902 (also known as the Cooper Act) provided a blueprint for the American occupation of the Philippines. As well as prescribing the manner in which the new insular possessions were to be governed, this organic law defining the nature of the American colonial administration of the Philippines provided instructions for classifying, ordering, clustering and transforming its new colonial subjects. Section 7 of the Act provided for the establishment of a Philippine Assembly, elections for which were only to be held two years after the publication of a nationwide census, and only upon complete and general peace in the archipelago, as certified by the president of the United States.

The Philippine Census of 1903 — which was published in 1905 — clearly provided the new colonising power with more than a count of the people it administered.[1] The census was tied to two political conditions: elections for the Philippine Assembly and the absence of anti-American movements in the archipelago. The

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1 Philippine Commission, *Census of the Philippine Islands: Taken under the direction of the Philippine Commission in the year 1903* (Washington: US Bureau of the Census, 1905).

Act made clear that the census was an important element in the colonial political project, designed to further the United States' designs. The census of 1903 would apply new ways of categorising people according to the colonisers' racial, civilisational, social, cultural and political orientations. People were classified as civilised or wild; healthy or defective; labouring or dependent. I have argued elsewhere that, far from being a neutral instrument of government, the data collection, collation, and census presentation was part of the application of the new regime's ideology of occupation. The standard hierarchies in the social, medical, ethnic and racial categories found in contemporaneous sources were reflected in the colonial census programme. Societies and communities were located by the census in a 'hierarchy of categories based on the idea of progress and civilisation'.[2] The place of a group, whether constituted ethnically, politically, socially, or medically, was dependent on its position in this hierarchy of categories. The census, in fact, not only created these categories, and organised them amongst the subject people, but defined the relationship between subject people and the new coloniser. Paul Kramer describes this project as 'the administrative, social-scientific expression of emerging Filipino–American political relationships in all their complexity'.[3]

The idea of classifying and categorising racial types and social groups of people by enumeration and by administrative recording was not an entirely new idea in the Philippines. Florentino Rodao notes that the Spanish colonial administration, particularly through the many waves of emigration, had created several layers of racial categories based on parentage, place of birth, class, and even political orientation.[4] Filomeno Aguilar demonstrates that even nationalist historiography was informed by the constructs of racism and nationalism.[5] *Ilustrado* expressions of Filipinoness, despite their slippery, malleable and at times hazy formulations, tended to exclude the highland peoples, the Negritos and the Muslims in their discourse. In addressing the idea of 'genuineness', for example, Aguilar described *ilustrados*' fear of 'contamination that could blur cultural-cum-class boundaries' — a concept that resonated with notions of racial purity and the consequences of racial mixture.[6] Racial hierarchy and population classification were therefore already in place at the beginning of the American colonial project. In an earlier article, I examined not only the census counts, but also photographs and historical essays included in anthropological and sociological studies on Philippine society conducted contemporaneously in the early years of the American occupation.[7] That article opened the possibility of utilising other sources that may reveal the different images and representations of Filipinos

2 Francis Gealogo, 'Beyond the numbers: Colonial demography and the representation of the native in the Philippines', *PSSC Social Science Information* 30, 2 (2002): 17.

3 Paul Kramer, *The blood of government: Race, empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006), p. 220.

4 See Florentino Rodao, 'The salvational currents of emigration: Racial theories and social disputes in the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century', this issue.

5 Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., 'Tracing origins: "Ilustrado" nationalism and the racial science of migration waves', *Journal of Asian Studies* 64, 3 (2005): 605–37.

6 Ibid., p. 630.

7 Francis A. Gealogo, 'Sa likod ng mga bilang: Ang kolonyal na census at ang ideyolohiya ng imperyalismong Amerikano sa Pilipinas' [Beyond the numbers: Colonial census and the ideology of American imperialism in the Philippines] (Quezon City: CSSP, Unversity of the Philippines-Diliman, 1999).

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from various perspectives, calling for further historical elaboration of ethnic, religious, linguistic and class differentiation.

The census was therefore not the only expression of racialised categorisation nor the only representation of Philippine society as the new American colonial subject population. The Philippines' participation in the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904, for example, became one of the major controversial ways in which the 'brown man' representatives of the islands were seen in the context of the expansion of American hegemony over various coloured peoples, including Native Americans and African Americans.[8] Benito M. Vergara, Jr., explores the role of photography in what he sees as 'the legitimation of the American colonial enterprise in the Philippines'.[9] He concludes that photography helped to standardise 'the stereotype images of the Philippines and the Filipinos that were predicated on inferiority, an unmanageable heterogeneity of people, and the presumed incapacity for self-rule'.[10]

The 1903 Philippine Census reflected the hierarchy of categories into which the colonial subjects were to be allocated. Filipinos were to be classified as either 'civilised' or 'wild'. Those groups considered civilised were the Christian groups belonging to any of the eight major 'tribes' of Bicol, Cagayan, Ilocano, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Tagalog, Visayan, and Zambalan. 'Wild' populations were further divided into four subgroups:

> Those who were essentially savage and nomadic in their habits, such as the head-hunters of Luzon and certain of the Moros; those who are peaceful and sedentary, such as many of the Igorots; those who are peaceful, nomadic, and timid, such as the Negritos, the Mangyans of Mindoro, and the pagans of Mindanao, who, on the appearance of strangers, flee to the fastnesses of the forests and jungles, and cannot be approached; and finally, those who compose the outlaw elements from the Christian towns, and are known as the *monteses*, *remontados*, *vagos*, *nomadas*, *pulijanes* [sic], and *babylanes* [sic].[11]

The bases of ethnic classification here were apparently geographical location and orientation, linguistic affinities, and cultural characteristics. The last part of the passage, however, shows that the ultimate basis of classification was the degree of acquiescence and adherence to a basic Western definition of civilisation — the adoption of the colonisers' religion and lifestyle, in particular. Some 'civilised' groups and communities might therefore include 'uncivilised' members — those who openly challenged the legitimacy of the colonial government or did not subject themselves to its civilising processes. Thus *remontados* and *pulajanes*, though sharing the same language, culture, religion and ethnic identity with other groups classified as 'civilised', were still to be regarded as wild because they did not recognise colonial authority and openly challenged its legitimacy.[12] The distinction between 'civilised' and 'wild', as

8 See further, Jose D. Fermin, *1904 World's Fair: The Filipino experience* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2004).

9 Benito Vergara, Jr., *Displaying Filipinos: Photography and colonialism in early 20th century Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995), p. 4.

10 Ibid.

11 Philippine Commission, *Census of the Philippine Islands*, vol. 1, p. 23.

12 Gealogo, 'Beyond the numbers'.

Vicente Rafael notes, may be 'regarded in the census as relative and transitional', as the 'wild' existence of some groups may reflect the failure of an earlier colonial master, Spain, to conquer them.[13] This was seen as temporary, and the United States' control over all groups as immanent. Moreover, as Kramer notes, the 1903 Census 'formally installed the administrative difference between Christians and non-Christians, making Hispanic "civilization" the most important state of racial boundary line in the process'.[14] To this end, non-Christians were to be located outside of the new administration imposed upon the Filipinos by the Americans.[15] The racialised definition of the Westernised native became the basis for future integration to a possible independent, civilised, political administration.

The Philippine Census therefore achieved not only the statistical tabulation of population data, but a reiteration of colonising ethnography, to project a pejorative categorisation upon all groups that did not conform to Western ideas of being civilised. The consequences of being classified as 'civilised' included becoming a potential functionary in the political state apparatus that would be created out of the system of colonial tutelage. The range of categories deployed in the census project — from wild, barbarian, and untamed existence at one extreme, through to the state of being civilised, peaceful, and having an orderly existence, at the other — was tied to the agenda of further integrating the 'native' races into the colonial fold. The very definitions of political participation, Filipino racial exclusivity, and civilisational preparedness, grew more precise over the course of the census project. For Michael Salman, 'the census did more than just satisfy a precondition for the assembly that opened in 1907' — it established a hierarchy in which only those provinces considered 'regular' (that is, populated by 'civilised' groups) could elect representatives to the legislative body of the Filipinos.[16] 'Wild' groups of 'uncivilised' peoples and races could not be permitted to take part in the elections, but more than this, such groups 'were not considered Filipinos'.[17]

This binary categorisation of the population thus suggested the possibility that native bodies might be transformed into the likeness of the new hegemonic power. As people were classified, the categories in which they were placed were given new meanings and definitions according to their capacity to reflect the new type of public order that was to take shape in the new colony. Bodies were either labouring or dependent; healthy or sick; civilised or wild. Rafael also notes that the census project tended to proclaim both the 'benevolence' of America and the disciplinary trajectory of its colonial projects.[18] Census enumeration required the pacification of the people to be counted, as well as the involvement of a recruited local elite as collaborator subjects, performing the bureaucratic tasks of counting, enumerating, tabulating and computing.[19] Benedict Anderson mentions a contrary, non-racial view of census

13 Vicente Rafael, 'White love: Census and melodrama in the US colonization of the Philippines', in *White love and other events in Filipino history,* ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), p. 33.
14 Kramer, *The blood of government*, p. 224.
15 Ibid.
16 Michael Salman, *The embarrassment of slavery: Controversies over bondage and nationalism in the American colonial Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), pp. 147–8.
17 Ibid.
18 Rafael, 'White love', p. 32.
19 Ibid., pp. 26, 28.

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enumeration, which, together with the development of cartography and the institutionalisation of museums, contributed to the 'imagining' of a nation.[20] Anderson argues that the census project was innovative not so much in its 'construction of ethnic-racial classification, but rather, in their systematic quantification',[21] concluding that the census was meant to 'regulate, constrict, count, standardize and hierarchically subordinate these [non-state, including religious] institutions' under the state.[22]

Enumerating 'defective' classes

Several attempts at enumerating and measuring the physical and intellectual capacities of the Filipinos would highlight their supposed evolutionary status from a 'wild' into a 'civilised' state, which was also used to account for the variations in health and wellness of different segments of the population. The 1903 Philippines Census, for example, contained a prominent section analysing data on physical and mental disabilities, under the category of 'defective classes'. The question asked during the census was whether persons were deaf, dumb, blind or insane. The results were presented in Tables 1 to 5 of the census, and organised by sex, colour, tribe, and age.[23]

Mental defects

The 1903 Census reported '220 insane in every 100,000 inhabitants, which may be compared with 170 per 100,000 in the US in 1890'.[24] It was found that the 'proportion increased rapidly with advancing age at first, and then more slowly, reaching a maximum in the age period 45 to 54 years, beyond which it diminished'.[25] It was also observed that the average life expectancy of the insane was shorter compared to that of the general population.

In presenting the insanity figures and correlating these with level of civilisation, the census suggested that some 'civilised' groups tended to exhibit a greater incidence of insanity than others. The prevalence of insanity amongst the Pangasinense and the Visayan peoples was noted, while the Cagayanes and the Pampangos were said to have the lowest incidence of insanity. The high incidence of insane persons among the 'civilised' populations warrants some explanation. Under the Spanish colonial administration, Christian Filipinos had been classified according to their religion and availability as labour. Exemptions from forced labour were based on social status, age, and state of health. The infirm or insane were automatically exempted (*reservados por enfermedad*) from rendering forced labour (*polos y servicios*). In some cases, colonised *indios* would report sickness, insanity or disability in order to be exempted from labour services. In some *vecindario* (neighbourhood) lists that I examined in an earlier study, for example, there were abnormally high rates of people classified as '*loco*' (insane).[26] It seems likely that these high rates of insanity may be partly accounted

20 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Anvil, 2003).
21 Ibid., p. 168.
22 Ibid., p. 169.
23 Philippine Commission, *Census of the Philippine Islands*, vol. 3, pp. 533, 534–73.
24 Ibid., p. 534.
25 Ibid.
26 Gealogo, 'Beyond the numbers', p. 15.

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for by the misreporting of illness as a means to evade forced labour. Despite the sophisticated and elaborate measures adopted by the colonial establishment to utilise population counts for administrative functions, this may have been a classic example of 'weapons of the weak' at work.[27]

Formulations of Filipino sanity and insanity had long fascinated colonial bureaucrats. The tropics were regularly represented as being conducive to nervous breakdowns, as Warwick Anderson points out, with its alien and depleting climate that challenged even the most 'civilised' white men and produced what was known as tropical neurasthenia.[28] According to Anderson, 'the nervousness of American men in the tropics, (whether "tropical neurasthenia", or "Philippinitis" or "brain-fag"), was not formally recognized until about 1902 or 1903', so that its course travelled parallel with the state of the civil government in the Philippines, 'reaching epidemic proportions when expatriate colonial bureaucracy was most extensive, and declining with the eventual "Filipinisation" of the service'.[29]

Mental and nervous disorders became associated with life in the Philippines, particularly for expatriate Americans. Some visitors mentioned this disease as 'Philippinitis' — a disease associated with forgetfulness, 'which makes many persons unable to recall common occurrences within a few hours'.[30] The closest local term for this may be '*mali-mali*' — talking nonsense, mimicking in a parrot-like manner the utterances of another with whom one is conversing. It is to be noted that *mali* literally means wrong, or incorrect, so that *mali-mali* refers to uttering repetitive nonsensical words. As in most Austronesian languages, repeating a word either renders its referent plural, or a superlative.

Colonial writings on 'Philippinitis' were instructive on two grounds. The first was the notion that the Philippines' tropical climate made its visitors and inhabitants more susceptible to mental deformities and illnesses. Colonial researchers argued that high temperatures and humidity had degenerative effects on mental capacity and on sanity. Filipinos' capacity to attain civilisation through education was therefore seen as being limited by their tropical environment. Hence, developing hill stations such as Baguio for rest and mental regeneration was suggested as a remedy early in the American presence, just as they were by other powers in their colonial territories.

The other, more significant, implication of 'Philippinitis' is latent in the name itself. Describing a tropical malady by the name of the country created a strong association between mental illness and the national character. Anderson points out that 'more than just a disease in culture, tropical neurasthenia was a disease of a specific culture'.[31] Since exposure to tropical environments was thought to make not only individuals, but entire peoples, prone to mental deficiencies, the Filipino national character was yoked to this tropical malady. The colonial civilising mission, according

27 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

28 Warwick Anderson, 'The trespass speaks: White masculinity and colonial breakdown', *American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997): 1343–70.

29 Ibid., p. 1345.

30 Nicholas Roosevelt, *The Philippines: A treasure and a problem* (New York: n.p., 1926), p. 245, quoted in ibid., p. 1344.

31 Ibid. See also Warwick Anderson, *Colonial pathologies: American tropical medicine, race and hygiene in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006).

to this line of argument, was essential for transforming and reorienting the natives' limited and disease-prone faculties. In fact, exposure to the tropics was believed to render even Americans more susceptible to neurasthenia.

Brain weight

In order to properly analyse the mental faculties of the Filipinos, some colonial scientists imagined that they needed to measure and weigh their brains. Measurements had to be precise in order to obtain accurate predictions of the capacity of the Filipino to be educated and transformed into the colonial image, as well as native tendencies to mental degeneracy and illness. The measurement and analysis of Filipino brains had begun in a project of the American Bureau of Science in Manila as early as the first decade of American rule. From 1904–06, postmortem examinations were made of the brain weight and size of male pure-blooded native Filipinos who died in Bilibid Prison, the largest penitentiary in the country. The racialised orientation of this study is shown by the fact that it excluded mixed blood, Chinese, or mestizo inmates who died in prison. Since the colonial establishment regarded prisoners as the degenerate class of the native population, the native prisoner would represent the lowest of the lowest classes. Their brain measurements were expected to reflect this. Political prisoners' brain samples were also included in the study, as they were classified as 'wild' in the census. Maximilian Herzog, the pathologist in charge of the study, justified it in these terms:

> The inmates of a great prison or penitentiary in the territory of one of the recognized civilized nations of the world include many individuals who may be fairly regarded as degenerates … Among the [prisoners], at the time the following data were recorded, were numerous political prisoners who, long after the establishment of the American civil government, had persisted in rebellion and hostility. There were also included many prisoners who had always led the life of *ladrones* in the more distant islands and mountainous districts, and who did not consider theft, robbery, or murder, for which they were finally imprisoned, any more criminal than the feudal lords … [who] regard their internecine wars or their ill-treatment of the persons or property of the serfs or subjects of their foes […] where their original tendencies have not been spoiled by too intimate contact with western civilization, their [the Filipinos'] morals on the whole are good, but as a race they are of course less mature in mental, moral, and ethical development; they are more childlike, and their power of inhibition is not strongly developed.[32]

Herzog's reasoning reflected the paternalistic Western views that colonisers often assumed with respect to native subjects. Moreover, the linking of race and criminality, civilisation and moral and ethical development, resonates with the census classifications, particularly notions of 'wildness'. Hence, underlying the measurement and analysis of Filipino brains was the idea that, as a race, the Filipinos 'succumb much more easily to temptation and in contact with civilized institutions and relations they are more easily led astray than the more highly educated western individuals, therefore more frequently do they come in conflict with law'.[33]

32 Maximilian Herzog, 'The brain-weight of the Filipino', *American Anthropologist* 10, 1 (1908): 41–2.
33 Ibid., pp. 41–7.

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In all, 113 brains were examined, all from males who had died in prison from various illnesses, ranging in age from 17 to 79. The smallest brain examined was 1,040 grams, the largest 1,605 grams, and the average weight across the sample was 1,333.54 grams. Body weight to brain weight ratios were also computed. Herzog argued that the average brain measurements of the native, while relatively smaller than those of their Western counterparts, and despite certain limitations in size and weight, showed evidence of potential for improvement. Given average brain size, the study concluded, Filipinos might be educated 'to the same degree of civilization as the Western nations'.[34] According to this, with the proper American guidance, civilisation could be obtained.

Physical defects and body measurements

If natives' brains were to be weighed to analyse their capacity to be civilised, it was considered equally important to measure their physical bodies. The 1903 Census indicated that physically 'defective' classes were more prevalent than mentally 'defective' amongst the Philippine population. Three-quarters of those classified as being of a defective class had physical disabilities, compared with one-quarter who were classified as mentally defective or insane (of around 60,000 in total, 15,000 were classified as insane and 45,000 as blind, deaf or dumb). Most colonial officials accordingly paid more attention to the physical and anatomical features of Filipinos than to their mental development, and physical studies were vigorously pursued. Cranial size, height, shoulder width, nasal shape, forehead size, arm and leg lengths, and many other details were measured, catalogued and printed on each page of the 'specimen' photos of various 'Philippine types'.

Daniel Folkmar's *Album of Philippine types (found in Bilibid Prison in 1903)* compiled around the same time as the Census, exemplified such studies.[35] Folkmar analysed the body types of the Bilibid prison population. The album was produced under the auspices of the Philippine Exposition Board, a committee established to plan which 'materials' were to be shipped from the Philippines to the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition of 1904, better known as the St. Louis World's Fair.[36] The Bilibid prisoners were made to undress, and were photographed and measured; they then had to pose for plaster cast models. Each subject's height, arm span, shoulder width, length and breadth of head, nose, chest, weight, cephalic index, and nasal index were measured and recorded. The front and side view portrait photographs were also intended to display the shape of the subject's head. The measurements were supplied in detail alongside the corresponding subject's photograph. The samples were then arranged into representative types based on linguistic communities (e.g. Tagalog, Visayan, etc.), race (e.g. Negrito, Malay), and religion (e.g. Muslim Moro, Christian). The photographs and plaster models became part of the Philippines' exhibit at the St Louis World's Fair, and Folkmar's album published as

34 Ibid., pp. 47.

35 Daniel Folkmar, *Album of Philippine types (found in Bilibid Prison in 1903): Christians and Moros, including a few non-Christians* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1904).

36 Charley Sullivan, '"I hope to do something among the native races": Anthropology, anthropometry and photography in the American racial project in the colonial Philippines', unpublished paper (2013), p. 19.

a coffee-table souvenir for visitors.[37] There was an implicit assumption that some types of Filipinos were more vulnerable to particular diseases and physical 'defects', and that these types should therefore be remodelled to make them more civilised.

All in all, the 80 plates in the *Album of Philippine types* were meant to represent the 43 provincial 'types' found in Bilibid Prison in 1903.[38] Subjects who seemed abnormal were omitted from this collection. The selection process for 'representative samples' of each province and group was as follows:

> First, all the men from a given province were lined up by height, and from twenty to fifty, where possible, those being of all heights, were taken for measurements. Secondly, from the ranks of those chosen men a selection was made by intervals for photographs and for more minute study; the resulting list was thus fairly representative of the chief physical types; if any were manifestly abnormal they were rejected. Thirdly, from the large number of photographs thus obtained for the exhibit, fifteen or twenty in the case of some provinces, it was aimed to select two of the best for those nearest the average of their province.[39]

Although the entire process of selection, classification and recording raises serious methodological issues, what is apparent is that the project aimed to categorise and represent groups of subject people for the exhibition by presenting prisoners' physical measurements and racial characteristics, collated according to 'types'.

Conditions in Bilibid made it ideal for such a colonial project of racial representation. As Kramer notes, no other colonial institution in the archipelago could provide the breadth of representative samples of Filipino 'racial types' that Bilibid offered.[40] The coercive nature of the institution also made it an ideal site for such anthropometric surveys. Prisoners were compelled to become subjects, and to physically submit themselves to invasive scrutiny. The researchers could not only measure each 'specimen' in great detail, but also undertake a still more comprehensive representation of the population through photographs and plaster models. This made for a rich display at exhibitions such as the St. Louis World's Fair.[41]

This display of Filipino racial types, for the World's Fair visitors as well as readers of the souvenir *Album*, constituted what Raymond Corbey terms the phenomenon of 'ethnographic showcases' during the height of colonialism.[42] Corbey sets these showcases amidst the 'collecting, measuring, classifying, picturing, filing, and narrating of colonial Others' integral to colonial projects. The exhibitions bore witness 'to the successful imperialist expansion of 19th-century nation states and to the intricate connections that developed between scientific and political practices'.[43] Visitors could witness these 'savages on display', and even take part in scientific research on racial characteristics. In this regard, 'phrenology, craniology, physiognomy and anthropometry shared the assumption that in the outward shape and physical appearance of the

37 Kramer, *The blood of government*, p. 230.
38 Folkmar, *Album*, pp. 1–5.
39 Ibid.
40 Kramer, *The blood of government*, pp. 229–30.
41 Ibid.
42 Raymond Corbey, 'Ethnographic showcases, 1870–1930', *Cultural Anthropology* 8, 3 (1993): 338–69.
43 Ibid., p. 338.

body, the inner character — of different races, but also of criminals, prostitutes, and deviants — was manifest'.[44] Accordingly, many photographs from colonial contexts not only categorised peoples and races, but also would show moments 'from the story they presuppose and illustrate'.[45] Hence the focus on Bilibid prisoners as representatives of the colonised population to be rescued by the US administration, ordered systematically so that they could be brought into the ambit of Western, Christian civilisation. Folkmar's *Album* was to be viewed not only as a souvenir of the Philippines exhibit at the World's Fair, but propaganda about the potential of American hegemony to lift a degenerative race towards progress and civilisation.

Both race and body size were instrumental in colonial representations of the native population's failure to arrest extremely high levels of infant and maternal mortality in the early American period. The census highlighted these mortality rates and made explicit comparison with similar statistics for the United States and Europe. In an article published in 1913 in the *Journal of Race Development*, James Robertson argued that the high mortality rates in the Philippines, particularly maternal and infant mortality, were largely due to native ignorance of proper nutrition, and consequently poor diet.[46] If it continued, such ignorance would prove detrimental to their race, and infant and maternal mortality would remain at unconscionable levels. Viewed through the lens of the Social Darwinism prevalent at the time, Robertson's correlation between mortality and the poor Filipino diet suggested that learning from American civilisation, along with its superior nutritional knowledge, would ensure the development of a 'race which can compete with other races'.[47]

Criminalising race: Lombroso's legacy

Folkmar's studies echoed those of Cesare Lombroso's work in criminal anthropology and anthropometry. Lombroso studied the physiognomy of criminals and found correlations between physiques, moral and social deviance, and criminal tendencies.[48] In his classic work, *Criminal man* (1911), Lombroso asserted explicitly that race and racial categories were significant factors in the origins of crime and criminality.[49] Lombroso saw race as an 'atavistic origin of crime' and suggested that there were whole tribes and races more or less given to crime.[50] Moreover, there were many 'physical anomalies of criminals': enormous jaw, strong canines; well-developed orbital arches; arm span exceeding height; a scanty beard; prehensile feet; fewer palm lines; cheekpouches; overdeveloped middle incisors; a flattened nose; an angular or sugar-loaf shaped skull; excessive size of the orbits; a hooked nose; projection of the lower part of the face and jaw and cranial bones. These all pointed, for Lombroso, to the atavistic origin of the criminal type: the physical, psychic, and

44 Ibid., p. 354.
45 Ibid., pp. 359–60.
46 James Robertson, 'Notes from the Philippines', *Journal of Race Development* 3, 4 (1913): 467–90.
47 Ibid., p. 489.
48 See Cesare Lombroso, 'Illustrative studies in criminal anthropology', *Monist* 1, 3 (1891): 336–43; 'Criminal anthropology applied to pedagogy', *Monist* 6, 1 (1895): 50–59; and *Criminal man* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1911).
49 Lombroso, *Criminal man*.
50 Ibid., pp. 139–40.

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functional qualities of remote ancestors remained prominent.[51] He likened these racial features to those of various animals (e.g. snakes, parrots, apes) to describe the animal-like physical traits of criminals. Lombroso's studies involved documenting, photographing, and classifying criminals and deviants, who, he said, 'exhibited the outward and visible signs of a mysterious and complicated process of degeneration, which in the case of the criminal evokes evil impulses that are largely atavistic in origin'.[52] In another study, Lombroso suggested that the physical characteristics of a very large forehead, a very bushy beard, very large and soft eyes, and an over-developed jaw (but never hypertrophic), were also some common physical features of the criminal.[53] It is clear, however, that some of these 'physical anomalies' could also reflect the features of particular racial types, suggesting an obvious predisposition to criminality in the 'colored races'. Lombroso gave examples of these in his writing, together with descriptions of the physical characteristics of some animals mentioned, and related them to criminality and race. Gender was also included in the Lombroso studies. He observed the same types of 'physical anomalies' in female offenders, such as facial and cephalic anomalies, and argued that female criminals should also be photographed. He stressed the need for further studies on the brains and anthropometry of female offenders, which was discussed in further detail in another of his classic studies.[54]

Lombroso was interested in the pedagogical applications of his findings. In a lecture delivered to teachers in Turin in 1891, he argued that measuring pupils' physical characteristics would help to determine children's capacity to learn, uncover their race, and identify possible criminal tendencies.[55] Hence he urged the recording of students' features such as height; arm length; probable capacity of the cranium (calculated from the circumference, longitudinal curve, transversal curve of the head, and the two diametres); dimensions of the head; and respiratory capacity. In the same lecture, he suggested that various physical anomalies such as asymmetry of the face or skull; macrocephaly; strabismus; badly placed or oversized ears; enormous jaws; bad conformation of the teeth, especially the incisors; a flat or crooked nose; abundant hair on the forehead; and left-handedness were also all indications of criminality.[56]

A number of parallel Philippine studies, such as Sixto de los Angeles's analysis of the physical features of criminals, reflected Lombroso's strong influence.[57] Among the features mentioned were exaggerated plagiocephaly; facial asymmetry; cranial anomalies; large jaws; anomalies in the ears, nose, skin; dental anomalies; and other similar defects. These were all taken into account in the studies by de los Angeles and

51 Ibid., pp. 7–8.
52 Ibid., p. 24.
53 Lombroso, 'Illustrative studies in criminal anthropology'.
54 Lombroso, 'Criminal anthropology applied to pedagogy'.
55 Lombroso, 'Illustrative studies in criminal anthropology', p. 50.
56 Ibid., p. 57.
57 Sixto de los Angeles, *Estudios sobre antropologia criminal en las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1919). See Filomin Gutierrez, 'Studying criminality and criminal offenders in the early twentieth century Philippines', in *International Handbook of Criminology,* ed. Shlomo Giora Shoham, Paul Krepper and Martin Kett (Boca Raton: CRC, 2010), pp. 343–72; see also Filomin Gutierrez, 'The influence of Cesare Lombroso on Philippine criminology', in *The Cesare Lombroso handbook*, ed. Paul Knepper and Per J. Ystehede (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 324–41.

Folkmar. Filomin Gutierrez argues that the anthropometric measurement of the Bilibid inmates was not 'expressly intended to demystify the pathological dangers that lie in the bodies of convicted criminals; rather, it was designed to scrutinise and classify the racial and ethnic "types" that can be found in the Philippines'.[58] Be that as it may, it became obvious that the search for physical anomalies, the techniques of photographing and studying physical types, and the studies of racial and ethnic categories, were all seen as being connected to criminality and to the criminal. Indeed, the subjects of both scientific studies and the album of types were drawn from the same group of people — the convicts at Bilibid Prison. Michael Salman suggests that Bilibid was seen as the 'one place where so many different Philippine peoples can be seen, collected together from far-flung provinces by the colony's criminal justice system'. Following the principles of the Lombroso school of criminal anthropology, Bilibid 'conflated the categories of "Filipino" and "criminal" in distressingly meaningful ways'.[59] Bilibid, as a national colonial penitentiary, created the opportunity for the construction of knowledge about Filipino 'types' in a strongly racialised manner, and allowed correlations to be made between the physical attributes of criminals and the physical attributes of Filipinos.

Other studies on the physical characteristics of native subjects were made to highlight the location of Philippine 'types' within the hierarchy of races and groups. The American zoologist Dean C. Worcester was instrumental in the formulation of Filipino racial types. Lars Fogelin's essay on Worcester's colonial career notes his interest in the physical characteristics of the Negritos.[60] Worcester saw the Negritos as belonging to

> a distinct race. They are woolly-headed, nearly black, and of almost dwarfish stature. They seem to be incapable of any considerable progress and cannot be civilised. Intellectually, they stand close to the bottom of the human series, being about on par with the South African Bushmen and the Australian blacks ….[61]

More 'primitive' Filipinos, he asserted, were apelike; they were able to walk on difficult terrain because of their prehensile toes. Worcester highlighted the capacity of Filipinos to use their feet to pick up small things like pens or paper, further implying this simian character.[62]

The extensive documentation of Filipino prisoners' in itself provides a wealth of colonial era data (including photographs, fingerprints, gender, age, occupation, ethnolinguistic affinity, crime) for the historian and archivist to further explore, as Benjamin Weber discusses in a recent article on the prison archive.[63] Weber demonstrates the potential contribution of critical prison studies, interpreting the Bilibid

58 Gutierrez, 'Studying criminality', p. 360.
59 Salman, *The embarrassment of slavery*, p. 119.
60 Lars Fogelin, 'Dean Worcester: Race and the Philippines', in *Imperial imaginings: The Dean C. Worcester photographic collection of the Philippines, 1890–1913*, ed. Carla Sinopoli and Lars Fogelin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, 1998), pp. 80–117.
61 Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippines: Past and present*, vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan, 1914), p. 631.
62 Ibid., p. 536.
63 Benjamin D. Weber, 'Fugitive justice: The possible futures of prison records from US colonial rule in the Philippines', *Archive Journal*, Aug. 2017; http://www.archivejournal.net/essays/fugitive-justice/.

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records as indicative of colonial techniques designed to 'classify and track colonial subjects'. Indeed these techniques 'produced criminal subjects through institutional practices such as the creation of prison intake records, and categories like "prisoner" authorised them to be acted upon in certain ways'.[64] The files containing individual prisoner cards with their mug shots and fingerprints archived the experience of the individual subject categorised by the state as criminal, and demonstrate the power and authority of the state over its subjects.[65]

In the early twentieth century Philippines, these and other programmes and studies contributed to racialised assumptions of physical attributes, linked with the idea of a 'defective population', which were considered as obstacles to public order and civilisation. Diet was seen as another factor determining the receptivity of the population to civilisation, public order and public health. In a short paper on race and food intake in 1928, former director of the Philippines Bureau of Health Victor Heiser noted that the Filipinos' small stature was partly due to their dietary preferences.[66] He cited several experiments by nutritionists and other scientists who found that the stature of Filipinos, which was comparable to that of the Japanese and Javanese, was largely due to their nutritional intake. Heiser implied that diet not only had a bearing on stature, but that the consumption of specific types of food influenced mental and psychological dispositions. Being combative or gentle in demeanour, for instance, were functions of diet. Moreover, dietary preferences would also affect the vulnerability of certain groups to specific diseases. In the Philippines, for example, those who consumed white, polished rice became more vulnerable to beriberi, while beriberi did not manifest in those whose diet included brown rice as a staple. Richard Strong of the colonial laboratory services units in Manila, in a 1913–14 experiment on the nutritional intake of Bilibid Prison inmates, conducted controlled studies that made authoritative conclusions along these lines. One group of prisoners was given an unpolished rice diet while a control group retained their usual polished white rice diet. The difference between the Strong and Heiser studies was in their experimental subjects. While Heiser used guinea pigs as specimens, Strong used live human subjects. Strong was also known for a study conducted half a decade earlier on the vulnerability of native bodies to cholera, in which prisoners were accidentally given the plague virus, with fatal consequences.[67]

Colonial interest in local vulnerability to tropical diseases was also discussed with a view to assessing their productive labour capacity. In his classic essay on the indolence of the Filipino, José Rizal noted that the capacity to appreciate work among the Filipinos was greatly influenced by a number of environmental, ecological, economic, social and political factors.[68] Rizal argued that aside from environmental forces, the main source of Filipino economic inactivity was colonial maladministration; hence instilling a new national sentiment and reflecting on its social and moral foundations

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Victor Heiser, 'Food and race', *Foreign Affairs* 6, 3 (1928): 427–31.
67 Eli Chernin, 'Richard Pearson Strong and the iatrogenic plague disaster in Bilibid Prison, 1906', *Reviews of Infectious Diseases* 11, 6 (1989): 996–1004.
68 José Rizal, 'The indolence of the Filipino', in *Political and historical writing* (Manila: National Heroes Commission, 1963), pp. 111–29.

would help Filipinos realise the value of work. Syed Hussein Alatas argues that the racialised representation of the lazy, dull native Southeast Asian was the product of several centuries of colonial domination, and that it was false and vulgar.[69] In his study of penal labour, Salman notes that the use of prisoners in infrastructure projects was another manifestation of the penal institutions' capacity to reform the body of the criminal by involving them in manual labour. Conversely, manual labour was intended to make the prisoners realise the value of discipline and work as necessary conditions for the realisation of civilisation.[70] In his assessment of the Iwahig Penal Colony, Salman suggests that, given the farm's depiction as 'a "prison that makes men free", among a people supposedly "unfit" for independence, should not the entire population be incarcerated to make them free?' This case shows the contradictions between the racialised presentation of colonial Philippines and the prosecution of reformatory, civilisational projects.

Conclusion

In an article published in the 1918 *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Heiser triumphantly listed American achievements in colonial medicine and public health.[71] He noted that the 'sanitary procedures which have been in force and have been producing good results for many years in the Philippines are now gradually coming into use and are being heralded as among the most modern and recent advances'. The construction of hospitals, application of quarantine procedures, the introduction of public health measures and the education of natives on hygiene and sanitation, among other matters, were part of the 'sanitary regeneration' of the islands.

> Thus, the United States, a nation that was almost entirely ignorant of tropical sanitation when it entered upon its war of 1898, is now gradually assuming a position of importance in this remarkable field. The establishment of educational institutions has followed hand in hand with the sanitary work, so that in the future the natives of the Philippines may have the knowledge to achieve health results for themselves.[72]

Heiser's triumphalism reflected the general sentiments of colonial public health officials of the period. It was based on the belief in the United States administration's supposed achievements in transforming native society and Filipino bodies and minds (and brains) from a population of defective classes, afflicted with diseases and racially prone to social deviance and filthy living, to model subjects comparable with the rest of the world. That limitations in native physical and mental conditions resulting from

69 Syed Hussein Alatas, *The myth of the lazy native: A study of the image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th century and its function in the ideology of colonial capitalism* (London: Cass, 1977).

70 Michael Salman, '"Nothing without labor": Penology, discipline and independence in the Philippines under United States colonial rule, 1898–1914', in *Discrepant histories: Translocal essays on Filipino cultures*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Quezon City: Anvil, 1995), p. 120.

71 Victor Heiser, 'American sanitation and its influence on the Orient', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 57, 1 (1918): 60–68. See also Anderson, *Colonial pathologies*.

72 Ibid.

their racial, civilisational background had been identified only made the triumph greater in the eyes of colonial health officials.

Although the Philippine Census project seems unrelated to the carceral regime in Bilibid Prison, as this article shows, the two were actually tied to larger colonial ventures of racialised knowledge production, representation and display. Both institutions created classificatory guidelines, not only for the enumeration of the confined population (the prisoners), but also for the general population. The racialised categories reflected in the census were scientifically 'verified' and 'tested' through various laboratory experiments, photography, and plaster casting of prisoners' body parts, and the results were displayed in exhibitions and publications. Moreover, the binary political division of the Philippine population — as either 'civilised' or 'wild', categories that would eventually have consequences in the configuration of the pro-American political system — was also remarkably represented in the classification of the prison population. Anthropological research on prisoners elsewhere, influenced by the Lombroso school, provided the impetus for seeing Bilibid as the ideal field site for scientific experimentation, and this became essential in other colonial projects such as the Philippine exhibit at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

More importantly, the representation of 'defective classes' and 'diseased subject peoples' became more apparent in both the census and the various studies of the Bilibid prison subjects. In representing the 'wild' and 'uncivilised' natives as well as in studying the physiognomy of prison populations, these projects not only put on display the new colonial subjects, but also highlighted the defects of those at the margins. If the acquired territory projected the potential success of the civilising mission of the new empire, those at its margins were expected to perform their potential to be transformed from their current states of being 'wild', criminal, and 'defective', and brought into the fold of civilisation. Enumeration, human experimentation, and incarceration were related activities in the racialised American disciplinary colonial regime, which presented itself as the harbinger of benevolent assimilation in the Philippines.